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SKETCH DEVELOPMENT PLAN

ERWIN, NORTH CAROLINA

ABSTRACT

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SUBJECT: Introduction
History
Population
Sketch Development Plan
Thoroughfares

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ABSTRACT: A long range land development plan designed for
flexible use in the formation of policies concern-
ing the physical growth of Erwin. The plan includes
probable growth areas and general estimates of land
needed for future growth. A thoroughfare plan for
the town is included.



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SKETCH DEVELOPMENT PLAN

ERWIN, NORTH CAROLINA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
ERWIN YESTERDAY	2
POPULATION	4
Future Growth	5
SKETCH DEVELOPMENT PLAN	6
Industry	6
Commerce	7
Residential Development	9
Public Uses, Parks and Open Space	10
Schools	11
Hospital	12
Airport	12
Parks and Open Space	12
THOROUGHFARES	14

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INTRODUCTION

Erwin will continue to be a desirable community in which to live and work only as it plans for improvement and continued growth and development. People and their homes and business are constantly changing. Plans are necessary to assure that all changes will result in a better Erwin. The effect of gradual changes can be seen in the condition of individual homes, the quality of water and sewer services, the appearance of a neighborhood, and even the general economy of the area.

The Town of Erwin was incorporated in April, 1967. New responsibilities and opportunities came with incorporation of the community. The municipal government assumed some services such as water, sewer, and garbage collection which Erwin Mills had provided in the past. Other functions new to the community also became the responsibility of the new government. Some of the new functions are street paving and maintenance, police protection, building inspection, planning, zoning, and municipal administration and tax collection.

The planning program will help the town operate efficiently and provide adequate services. Plans and ordinances will protect existing development by preventing or eliminating conflicting development. Plans will also be prepared to improve the quality of life in Erwin by providing parks and recreation programs, a thoroughfare system for traffic circulation, sidewalks, parking areas, and extension of utilities to areas not now served.

The Erwin Board of Commissioners created the Planning Board to assist the governing board in planning and regulating development in the town. The Planning Board is charged with studying the present condition of Erwin and its probable future development and with making plans for the best development of the town and surrounding area. The Planning Board may also prepare a zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to help implement plans for development.

ERWIN YESTERDAY*

The history of Erwin dates only from the early 1900's, but the community is located in an area rich in history that stretches back to colonial times. Erwin is located near the site of the old settlement of Averagesboro, which finds mention in accounts of both the Revolutionary War and the War Between the States.

The community of Erwin began with the erection there of a cotton mill in 1903 by the Erwin Cotton Mills Company. The company was formed in 1892 by a group of financiers who included W. A. Erwin and Washington Duke. The mills are now the property of a successor, Burlington Industries, Incorporated.

Clearing in Erwin began in 1902, construction started in the spring of 1903, and the mill was in full operation by the latter part of 1905. The site had been selected because of the proximity of the Cape Fear River (which it was thought might be developed as a source of power), the proximity of the cotton fields, and the probable supply of adequate labor.

The town which was constructed to house the workers of the mill was originally called Duke, but its name was changed to Erwin in 1926 when Trinity College in Durham became Duke University. There were about 300 houses in the initial plan. Basic services were established soon after the first development. In 1903 a post office and commissary were opened; in 1905 and 1906 a public school was organized and held its first classes upstairs over a dry-goods store; in 1904 Episcopal church services were begun, and within a short time a number of other denominations were holding regular services. The first doctor began practicing in 1903, and in 1910 the first hospital in Harnett County opened in Erwin.

The mill was enlarged in the 1920's, and a number of new homes were built for employees of the mill. During this same

*Most of the information on the early history of Erwin is taken from an essay by T. J. Harper, "History of the Town of Erwin, Harnett County, North Carolina" (1955).

period the company laid the water and sewer lines in the basic system which served the lettered and numbered streets of the central town.

All property in the community remained in the hands of the mill until the 1950's when Erwin Mills began selling houses and residential lots to residents of the town. This policy was continued by Burlington Industries and today almost all residences are owned by individuals. The one block business district was subdivided in 1961 and individual businesses were able to purchase the lot and structures which they occupied. The parking lot remained in common ownership.

Several functions were transferred from the mill to the municipal government when Erwin incorporated in 1967. Water and sewer lines serving the town were dedicated to the town. Responsibility for maintenance of lines and billing for services came with the dedication of lines. The town purchases water from Dunn whose treatment plant is located west of Erwin. Sewage is treated at the Erwin Mills treatment plant under an agreement with Burlington Industries. The mill discontinued garbage collection after incorporation and the town assumed this responsibility.

POPULATION

Census data for the Erwin area is available only for 1950 and 1960. Some additional data is provided by the special 1966 census. The corporate limits established in 1967 do not conform exactly to the urban area defined for census purposes prior to incorporation. The major difference is the exclusion of South Erwin area in the incorporated town.

Duke Township, in which Erwin is located, almost doubled in population between 1920 and 1930. This was due to major expansion of the mill. The township population increased over ten percent between 1930 and 1940. The 1950 census showed a decrease of about six percent, and the population has been relatively stable since 1950.

The population of the Erwin area defined for census purposes has declined slightly since data was first collected for the area in 1950. In 1966 the urban area had a population of 3,054. The population of the incorporated town was probably somewhat less since the South Erwin area is not within the corporate limits.

U. S. CENSUS OF POPULATION (1910-1966)

	<u>HARNETT CO.</u>	<u>DUKE TWP.</u>	<u>ERWIN</u>
1910	22,174	2,603	-
1920	28,313	2,675	-
1930	37,911	5,227	-
1940	44,239	5,835	-
1950	47,605	5,510	3,344
1960	48,236	5,587	3,183
1966	49,189	5,501	3,054

There were 966 household units in the Erwin urban area in 1960 with an average of 3.3 persons per household. The land use survey conducted in November, 1968, showed a total of 966 dwelling

units within the same area. While the total area had the same number of units, in 1968 there were 26 fewer units in the western part of Erwin and 26 more units in the rest of the area. Thus some changes have occurred, but the total population in the urban area has been stable. The houses in the western part of the town were removed for expansion of the mill. New houses in other parts of town replaced those older ones which were removed.

The land use survey in 1968 showed a total of 932 housing units in the existing incorporated area. If the average household size remained at 3.3, the town population would be approximately 3,075. There were 677 more housing units in the one mile area around Erwin with a population of approximately 2,235. Thus, there were about 5,310 people living within the Erwin planning area in 1968.

Future Growth

Erwin can expect its population and economy to remain relatively stable in the future. The population projection of 49,633 for Harnett County in 1980 indicates only minor growth in the county.* Urban areas within the county may show somewhat greater increases as people leave the rural areas and settle closer to industrial plants and businesses where they work. Based on trends of the last twenty-five years, Erwin and Duke Townships could not be expected to grow at all. But the eastern part of Harnett County including Dunn, has been growing due to recent industrial development. Although most of the new jobs are located in the Dunn area, some of the people have moved to Erwin. This trend will probably continue with a smaller proportion of Erwin residents directly employed by Erwin Mills.

*North Carolina County Population Projections: 1970, 1976, 1980", State Planning Task Force, N. C. Department of Administration, May, 1969.

SKETCH DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This Sketch Plan is a preliminary plan for the development of land in the Erwin area. It is based on current knowledge of the area and its anticipated growth. Knowledge of the Erwin area --its land, facilities, people and economy--is not complete. However, the Sketch Plan can serve as a guide while the Planning Board continues its studies and prepares a more detailed plans and programs for the development of the area. Zoning districts and regulations for uses in the districts will be based on the types of development proposed in this Sketch Plan. The Erwin Board of Commissioners should also consider this plan as they make decisions concerning public services for Erwin.

The Sketch Plan is limited to land development while the planning program is concerned with the total development of the community. Other aspects of community development as well as the means of implementing the recommendations of this plan and plans for community facilities will be covered in later studies as the Planning Board continues its work.

Industry

Erwin Mills is the dominant industry in the Erwin area in terms of employment, land area and capital investment. Other industrial uses such as the concrete plant, telephone service yard and building material service yard are more service oriented. Further industrial development in the Erwin area may have been affected by ownership of land by Erwin Mills. However, it is more likely that additional industrial development has been discouraged by the limited labor supply. It may be several years before the Erwin area can attract more industries but sites should be planned to accomodate future development.

Attractive industrial sites with water and sewer service and good access to transportation will encourage industrial development. Planning for future development will help to eliminate problems of industrial traffic in residential neighborhoods and inadequate water and sewer lines serving industries.

The following potential industrial sites are shown on the Sketch Plan:

- northwest of the railroad on both sides of U. S. 241
- the site of the old gravel pit adjacent to the Dunn-Erwin Airport
- north of U. S. 421 just west of the Black River

These are large open tracts of land which are either served by water and sewer lines or could be served in the future at reasonable expense. The sites have access to good transportation facilities and industrial uses would not conflict with adjacent uses.

All land adjoining the Erwin Mills plant is developed except for the low ground around the lake. The plan shows three residential blocks which could be purchased, cleared and developed either for manufacturing purposes or parking for Erwin Mills.

Commerce

The Erwin business district is small and compact. Parking is provided along the main street and on about one-third of the business district block. The business district needs to expand to allow development of new businesses related to shopping. The plan shows expansion of the business area on the east side of 12th Street between G and H Streets, the full block south of G Street between 12th and 13th Streets and the southeast and southwest corners of the intersection of F and 13th Streets. This would permit expansion of the business district while still maintaining a compact shopping area. All residential areas would either be separated from business by church properties or would face a side street with only side or rear property lines adjacent to business property.

The businesses outside of the central business district have not been developed and maintained in as organized manner as the central business block. The old Dunn-Erwin highway is lined with service stations, run-down stores and vacant commercial buildings. The small shopping area north of the intersection of 13th Street and Old Post Road is fairly neat and parking is provided.

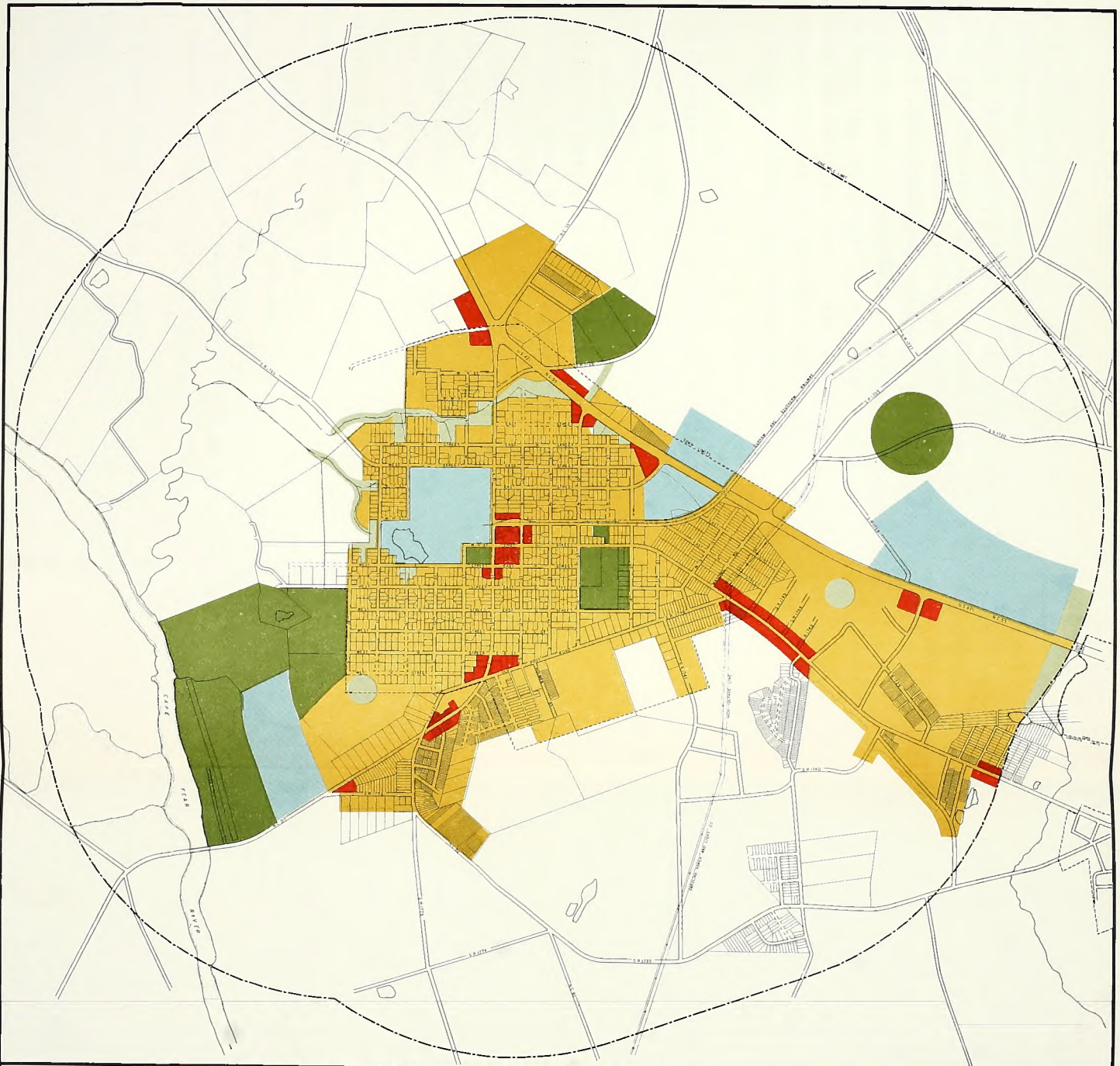
However, further south at the next intersection is an unattractive collection of old buildings, service stations and junk cars. This affects both the adjacent residential areas and the entire town since the junk yards and run-down buildings form a most unattractive entrance to Erwin.

The new highway has attracted some businesses already, mostly used car lots and service stations. A highway can be a good location for some businesses, but development should be planned and regulated so that turning and parking cars will not impede traffic, signs and buildings will not distract drivers, and the businesses will not eventually turn into a highway slum.

Commercial development along the highway can be limited to specific locations. The number of entrances to the highway can be controlled or locations can be selected so that access is from a side street rather than the highway. The highway is a major investment and property adjacent to it should be developed in a manner that will not impede or endanger traffic. The plan shows commercial development along U. S. 421 limited to the intersections at North 13th Street, State Road 1726, East I Street, and State Road 1728 (Wondertown Road).

The plan shows commercial development in East Erwin as a strip along the old highway from Masonic Road to the west end of State Road 1729. Much of the frontage is already in commercial use and it is not likely that any of it could be developed for residential purposes. The other business area is just west of Black River with two and one-half blocks frontage on the old highway. There are other scattered businesses along the highway but these open air uses and run-down businesses should be eliminated so the residential areas can be improved.

There are two auto salvage yards at the intersection of N.C. 217 and 82 south of Erwin. These have a blighting effect on adjacent residential areas and should be improved. This would be necessary to help improve the environment and housing in the South Erwin Area. There is a large auto salvage yard on State



SKETCH DEVELOPMENT PLAN

- URBAN RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC
- PARKS & OPEN SPACE

ERWIN
NORTH CAROLINA



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Road 1735 southeast of Erwin, but it is in a rural area and has no deleterious effect on adjacent rural uses.

There are existing scattered groceries and service stations at intersections throughout the planning area. These are not shown on the plan. While these businesses may not be in suitable locations, the businesses generally do not have a serious effect on adjacent uses. The proposed zoning ordinance would permit these existing businesses to continue even though they are not planned and zoned for commercial use. However, it is hoped that eventually some of the commercial buildings can be removed and the property converted to residential use.

Residential Development

The difference between planned and unplanned residential development is readily apparent in Erwin. The old part of Erwin where houses were built for mill employees was laid out in an orderly manner with wide street rights-of-way, lots large enough for front and side yards, and water and sewer lines. Although many of the houses are old and not expensive, the old residential areas are well maintained and are still desirable places to live. In contrast, areas in East Erwin and South Erwin were subdivided into narrow lots. Some streets were not platted with adequate right-of-way and many have not been paved. Sewer and water facilities are not available, presenting a potential health hazard. Some dwellings have not been well maintained and it may be difficult to improve some neighborhoods due to the poor development standards of the past.

One objective of the planning program is to assure that all future residential areas are well designed and developed with adequate facilities. The plans and ordinances will also help to assure that residential development occurs in the right place and that residential areas are not adversely affected by adjoining uses.

The plan shows existing residential areas and additional areas which are suitable for urban development. The southwestern part

of Erwin has already been subdivided and water and sewer facilities can be provided at reasonable cost. The area between A Street and N. C. 211 may also be subdivided and developed for residential use in the future. The area north of K Street has been subdivided. Sewer facilities are available and new water lines can be provided at reasonable cost when the area is developed.

Another prime area for new development is located south of Old Post Road. The town will not be able to serve the area with sewers until a major outfall line and a pumping station are constructed to serve the East and South Erwin areas. Parts of the area are poorly drained and should not be developed unless surface drainage is improved.

New residential development is taking place along U. S. 421 and N. C. 55 north of Erwin. It will be difficult for the town to extend water and sewer service to areas north of U. S. 421 and this should be considered in planning residential development in the area.

Much of the land in the one-mile area would be suitable for low density rural residential development. Since it would not be feasible to serve the outlying area with water and sewer, each dwelling will require a well and septic tank. Wells and septic tanks are desirable for long-term use only in rural situations. In subdivisions septic tanks and filter fields often give trouble after 5 to 7 years, and wells can become contaminated even on one-half acre lots. If areas are subdivided for residential development, it is desirable that they be planned so it is feasible to serve them with water and sewer facilities at some future time. Wells and septic tanks should be considered for long-term use only for scattered rural uses.

Public Uses, Parks and Open Space

The Erwin fire station and proposed site of the Town Hall are located on 13th Street between F and G Streets. It would be desirable to retain the entire block for public and semi-public uses. If necessary, some of the block could be used for parking

for the mill or for businesses in the central district. The same parking facilities could also be used for public functions at night or on week-ends.

A large area between Erwin and the Cape Fear River is used for water and sewage treatment by Erwin Mills. The Dunn water treatment plant is also located in this area. Eventually, the Town of Erwin may need to construct its own sewage treatment plant in this area.

Schools

There are two existing schools in the Erwin area. Erwin School has grades 1 through 12 and Gentry School is currently a grade school with grades 1 through 8. The Harnett County Board of Education has proposed reorganization of schools in the county. A new consolidated high school is proposed between Dunn and Erwin. Erwin School would be converted to a junior high school and Gentry School would serve as an elementary school for the area. Reorganization depends on construction of the consolidated high school and bonds were defeated in recent elections. The proposed high school should be considered in planning development along U. S. 421 between Dunn and Erwin since the site will probably be in this area.

The Erwin School site (15.2 acres) is not adequate for current enrollment. Enrollment would be reduced if converted to a junior high school but it would still not be adequate for long term use. The site could be expanded to the east by about 5 acres but four of the ten lots are developed with houses.

The Gentry School site (15.6 acres) could be enlarged as adjacent property is not developed. The existing site would be adequate for an elementary enrollment of about 500 pupils. Since the combined elementary enrollment of Erwin and Gentry is now almost 1500, additional land should be purchased to allow for enrollment of at least 1500 pupils. This would require a total of at least 25 acres or about 10 more acres than now is available.

Hospital

The Erwin Hospital is located on a site of about one acre on East H Street. There is no room for expansion and parking is inadequate. The Erwin Hospital probably won't require expansion since a new regional hospital was recently opened in Dunn. If additional space for expansion or parking is needed for the Erwin Hospital, adjacent residences will have to be purchased and cleared for hospital use.

Airport

The Dunn-Erwin airport is a small privately owned airport open for general public use. The existing runway is approximately 2900 feet long. The Federal Aviation Administration recommends a runway length of 3100 feet for this airport. Additional land should be purchased for extension of the runway and clear zones. The location is suitable for airport use since it does not interfere with other development. The runway could be extended to the northwest without major difficulty if the land can be purchased.

Parks and Open Space

The plan includes recommendations for neighborhood parks and a system of open spaces along drainage ways. Small parks with playground facilities are recommended in the following areas:

- 1) south of West A Street near the cemetery when the area is developed for residences.
- 2) on West F Street in conjunction with the proposed park around the lake.
- 3) west of 13th Street at the end of L Street.
- 4) in the East Erwin area, probably north of the old highway.

These small neighborhood parks should have from one to five acres with space for playground equipment, a small play court, and a play field. Full size softball or football fields are not necessary, but children and young people should have some place where they can have active games. The neighborhood parks would not need supervision unless some of the parks were used for

supervised summer recreation programs. The Erwin and Gentry school sites can serve as playgrounds for the central Erwin area and the area north of U. S. 421. However, there should be a written agreement between the County Board of Education and the town concerning the use of school property for recreation.

Public open space along drainage ways is shown on the plan. The low areas along streams and ditches have not been developed and are not suitable for future development. However, if the areas were cleared and maintained by the town, they would form an attractive network of park like areas through the town. Local civic organizations and service groups could begin the project by clearing certain sections for play areas and picnic grounds.

The small lake adjacent to the mill was drained recently after it became a nuisance. The area could be an attractive park if planned, developed, and maintained for this purpose. The town should acquire this area so it can be improved for public use. Federal funds are available to assist the town in improving the area for park use.

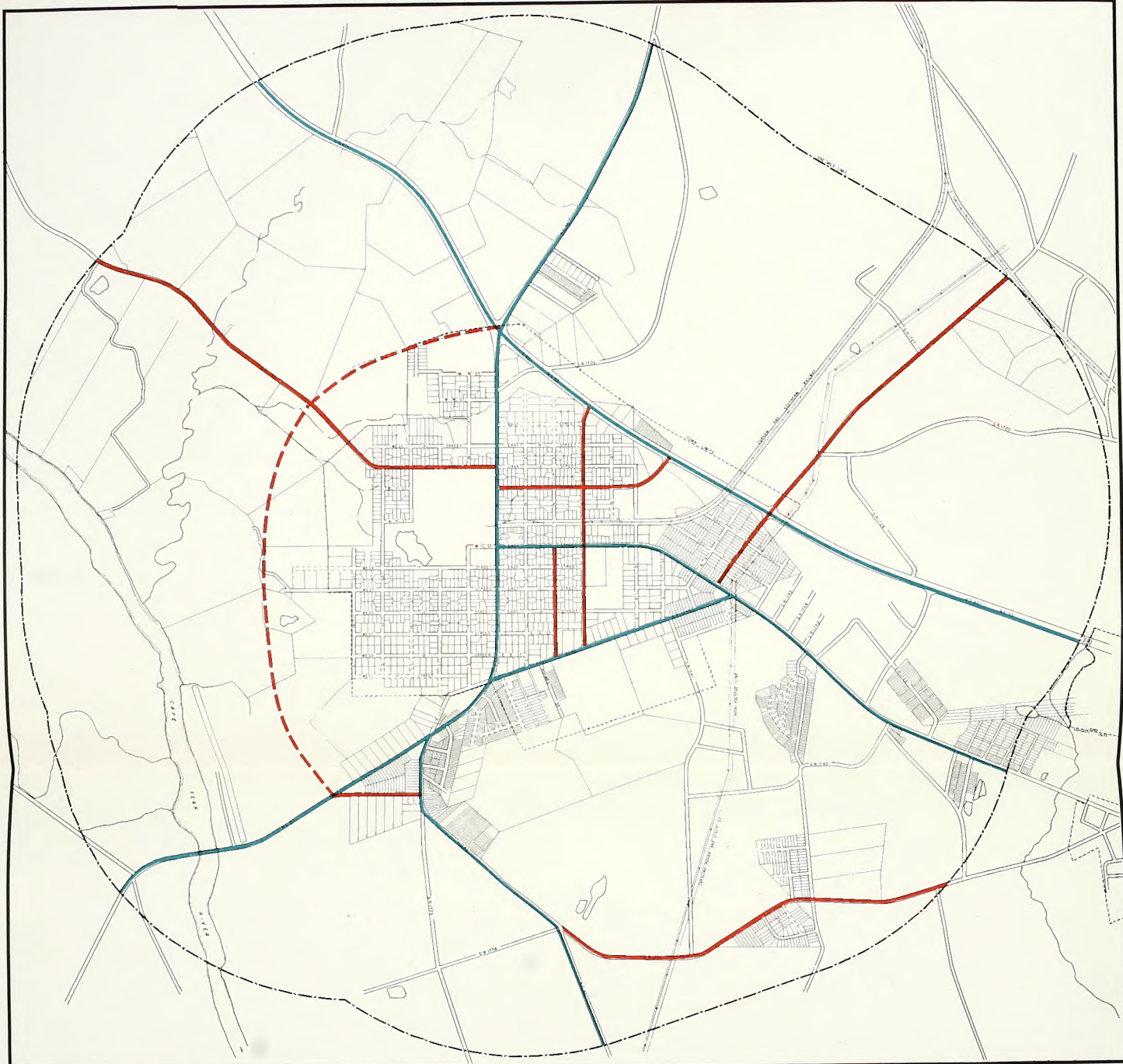
The Cape Fear River provides an attractive setting for natural parks, and the town should consider the development of a public park along the river front. The Planning Board will survey the area and determine the feasibility of establishing some type of park facility along the river.

THOROUGHFARES

The U. S. and N. C. Highways serve as the major thoroughfares for Erwin. The new U. S. 421 functions as a northwest-southeast bypass. N. C. 82 and 211 provide access to the south and southeast and also form the major north-south thoroughfare through Erwin.

Some of the existing town streets and State Roads have been identified as minor thoroughfares. These minor thoroughfares serve as both collector streets and access streets for abutting properties. A new minor thoroughfare is proposed on the west side of Erwin from the intersection of U. S. 421 and N. C. 55 to N. C. 211 south of Erwin. This proposed thoroughfare would serve the existing water and sewage treatment plants and potential industrial and residential sites west and southwest of Erwin.

The plan shows the realignment of two major intersections. A realignment of the intersection of Masonic Road, Old Post Road and East G Street would provide for more direct access and eliminate some potentially dangerous turning traffic. Minor realignment at the intersection of N. C. 211 and 82 south of Erwin would also help to prevent potential traffic problems.



THOROUGHFARE PLAN

EXISTING



PROPOSED



MAJOR THOROUGHFARE



MINOR THOROUGHFARE

ERWIN
NORTH CAROLINA



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